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California State Senate

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CONNIE M. LEYVA
TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT



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February 16, 2021

Joseph Castro, Chancellor
California State University
Office of the Chancellor
401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: Salary Steps for California State University (CSU) Support Staff

Dear Chancellor Castro,

I would like to begin by reiterating my congratulations to you as the CSU's newest Chancellor. I understand the many challenges you face—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic—and I want to work openly and collaboratively with you to address the CSU's programmatic needs. Please know that my staff and I are available to you should you need any assistance.

As you know, CSU's salary structure for its support staff has been broken for many years. I believe that it is an injustice when newly-hired employees earn more than their long-term colleagues, while working side-by-side doing the same job at the same CSU campus. To address these inequities, I am authoring legislation this year to provide CSU support staff an annual 5% salary step contingent on their job performance—a right afforded to every other California state employee. I realize that my legislation, by itself, will not correct the structural problems that exacerbate the pay disparities between employees. However, ensuring salary steps will prevent the further deterioration of a salary structure in need of repair.

In a November 5, 2019 letter to then-Chancellor Timothy White, Governor Gavin Newsom directed the CSU to negotiate in good faith and reach an agreement to resolve these salary disparities. Referring to CSU support staff, Governor Newsom wrote: "The upcoming negotiations should result in an agreement with our labor partners that erases the inversion gap, provides salary steps, and fairly and justly compensates these staff for their hard work." I have attached the letter for your review.

While I understand that salary steps were being negotiated in March 2020, they were disrupted by COVID-19 and labor-management made the decision to extend the existing contract through June 2022. I understand that the CSUEU contract has a provision to review the salary structure in a labor-management committee:

*Working Group on Salary Structure

The Parties agree to form a Working Group to review salary structure issues during the period of the successor Agreement.

**Section 20.40 of the January 31, 2018 – June 30, 2020 (extended to June 30, 2022) Collective Bargaining Agreement between the CSU Board of Trustees and the CSU Employees Union*

I urge you to incorporate salary inversion and salary steps as part of these deliberations, and work diligently to resolve these issues.

My legislation will be the third consecutive year that the salary steps bill has been introduced. The opposition by CSU to the prior two bills—even after the Assembly overwhelmingly approved last year’s AB 369 (Weber) by a 69-3 vote—and the testimony given in the two previous hearings of the Senate Education Committee, did not instill confidence that the CSU was prioritizing a resolution to this issue. It is my hope—and urging—that, under your leadership, a new commitment will take place to negotiate an outcome that ensures all CSU support staff are shown the dignity and respect they deserve.

I am hopeful that a fair and equitable resolution can be agreed to between the CSU administration and these affected workers. If this does not occur, I am afraid that the patience exhibited by my legislative colleagues and the Governor’s Office will be sorely challenged, and I want to earnestly avoid a climate that tarnishes the good work that you and the CSU can accomplish.

We must commit ourselves to a resolution of this long-standing issue and restore dignity to these employees and their families. With the challenges of COVID-19, I am confident that you recognize the important contributions of these workers to the CSU. However, for such recognition to be meaningful, the CSU must provide the fair and equitable wages these employees deserve.

My staff and I are committed to this effort. Let’s move forward together.

Sincerely,



CONNIE M. LEYVA
State Senator, 20th District

CC: Nichole Muñoz-Murillo (Assistant Vice Chancellor, CSU)

